

Annapurna Circuit, Nepal

An updated version of a Himalayan classic with sensational mountain scenery, traditional tea house accommodation and an airy crossing of the Thorong La pass.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Tea Houses
Grade	Vigorous / Strenuous
Duration	16 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 9 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Trek Leader Nepal
Land only	Joining in Kathmandu, Nepal
Max altitude	5,416m/17,769ft, Thorong La, Day 11

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



tel: +44 (0)1453 844400 fax: +44 (0)1453 844422 info@mountainkingdoms.com www.mountainkingdoms.com

Departures

Group departures

2023 Dates:

Sat 25 Mar - Sun 09 Apr

Sat 07 Oct - Sun 22 Oct

Sat 28 Oct - Sun 12 Nov

2024 Dates:

Sat 23 Mar - Sun 07 Apr

Sat 05 Oct - Sun 20 Oct

Sat 26 Oct - Sun 10 Nov

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

Please be aware that the option of a single room is not available in the tea houses. Please see the 'Your Accommodation' section of this itinerary for further information.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



These treks are led by professionally trained English-speaking Sherpas. We have many very experienced Sherpas living and working in the Annapurna region, for example:

Bhuwan K C - affectionately called 'KC' and the 2006 winner of the Wanderlust 'Paul Morrison' Guide of the Year award.

Durga Kattel - a very experienced guide who has knowledge of Nepali flora & fauna.

Jangbo Sherpa - another experienced and knowledgeable guide.

Passang Tapling - a very good leader and many people returning to us ask for him to be their leader again.

We cannot guarantee which Sirdar will be assigned to any particular departure, but the above information should give you a taste of our Annapurna leaders.

Your trip highlights

- The classic Himalayan trek adapted to avoid the road incursion in the Annapurnas but still retaining all the highlights of the original
- Wonderfully varied scenery and cultural interest at every step
- Crossing the Thorong La - a true high point at 5,416m/17,769ft
- Tea house accommodation to help support the local communities
- Views of some of the highest Himalayan peaks including Manaslu and Dhaulagiri
- Four star hotel in Kathmandu

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-3	Fly to Kathmandu. Drive to Chamje.
Days 4-5	Trek to Bagarchhap. Trek to Chame.
Days 6-7	Trek to Pisang. Trek to Manang.
Day 8	Rest day at Manang.
Days 9-10	Trek to Yak Kharka. Trek to Thorong Phedi.
Day 11	Cross Thorong La, 5,414m/17,764ft, trek to Muktinath.
Days 12-13	Morning view temples, afternoon trek to Jomsom via Lupra. Fly to Pokhara.
Day 14	Fly to Kathmandu.
Days 15-16	Time at leisure. Overnight flight to London.

Trip summary

Many people believe that the walk around Annapurna is *the* classic trek in Nepal. It offers not only some of the most breathtaking scenery in the Himalaya but the traveller also passes through a myriad cross-section of the culture of Nepal. You will visit centuries old Buddhist temples, pass Sadhus and pilgrims on their way to Muktinath, follow in the ancient footsteps of salt traders and encounter donkey trains with their bells ringing. You will also experience the camaraderie of traditional tea houses where you can get to know the ever friendly locals and share tales from the trail with your fellow trekkers.

The scenery is of course spectacular throughout. You start out along the fertile, heavily cultivated river bed of the Marshyangdi valley where shady banyan trees shelter scattered villages and varieties of mango and banana grow. Distinctive, two-storied houses here are brightly painted with red ochre or whitewash and are usually surrounded by the scarlet and orange blossoms of poinsettias and marigolds. The circuit continues through pine and juniper forest, then climbs through grassy meadows and high yak pastures to cross the Thorong La Pass, 5,414m/17,764ft, for unmatched views of the northern faces of Annapurna and her satellite peaks. The thrill of crossing the fabled Thorong La pass, adorned with its many prayer flags, will keep you talking for years to come. From the Thorong La you descend to Muktinath and join the many pilgrims who come to pay homage at the sacred local temples, before ending your trek in style by crossing the Lupra pass for some final magnificent mountain vistas.

Up until just a few years ago, there was little road development in the region, but it's sadly no longer possible to trek out through the Kali Gandaki Valley without encountering tarmac and vehicles. Therefore this updated version of the Annapurna Circuit finishes at Jomsom, at the top of the valley, bringing the trek to an end with the final flourish of a spectacular flight back to Kathmandu between the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri Massifs.

Just a few days shorter than the original version of the Annapurna Circuit, yet still with the key highlights, this previously named 'mini' version rightly retains its status of a classic Himalayan trek that has stood the test of time.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Depart London.

Depart London on your overnight flight to Kathmandu.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Kathmandu. Group transfer to hotel.

You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel. You might like to venture out to Thamel for your evening meal, or eat in the hotel restaurant if you are tired from your journey.

Overnight: Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu

Day 3: Drive to Chamje, 1,430m/4,692ft - 8 hours.

Today you will be picked up from your hotel for the drive to Chamje. Your journey takes you through deep gorges as you trace the Trisuli River westwards. You will pass through the small town of Mugling where the Trisuli and Marshyangdi rivers meet. The town also serves as the crossroads between Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitwan in the south. You pass over an impressive suspension bridge and begin to follow the Marshyangdi River, which will become a familiar sight, as it will be your companion all the way to Thorong Phedi. On this section of the road you will gain your first sight of the Annapurna and Manaslu ranges. After Mugling you turn north and the Annapurna Massif looms as you approach Besi Sahar. From here you will join a jeep track for a couple of hours passing through the villages of Syange and Jagat to reach the trek start point of Chamje.



Jagat is a very old village. Its name means 'toll-station', as this was once a tax collecting point for the Tibetan salt trade. When Bill Tilman visited the area in 1950 this route did not exist. Instead he had to walk along a series of wooden galleries tied to the rock face!

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 4: Trek to Bagarchhap, 1,700m/5,577ft - 6-7 hours.

Leaving Chamje you soon come to a suspension bridge to cross to the Marshyangdi's east side. You continue through a series of overhanging rock formations. After a short climb the path begins to traverse the rock face on a broad ledge. You then come to a series of stone steps and pass a couple of "Bhattis" (historically liquor distilleries) on your way. "Bhattis" originally offered just alcoholic drinks and some lodgings, but since the advent of tourism they now stock all sorts of soft drinks and snacks.

After a while, the trail evens out and you will pass through an archway - this is the gateway to Tal and the Manang district. "Tal" is the Nepali word for "lake" and you will see the broad expanse where a lake used to be. The trail leads to the right of this expanse beneath a mighty rock wall on your right. The people of the Manang region are Tibetan in origin and you will see increasing evidence of this Tibetan influence as you continue your trek up to Thorong Phedi. The architecture changes and you will see more Buddhist chortens and gompas. Another hint of this influence can be seen with a plethora of guesthouses with names such as "New Tibetan", "Lhasa" and "Potala" Guesthouses.

The trail from Tal is level for a while, giving a welcome relief for your legs. The Marshyangdi is wide and calm at this point. After an hour you cross a bridge back to the western side of the gorge. Over on the eastern bank you will see the old trail which was used until recently - however due to landslides it is no longer safe. You continue to climb to reach the village of Dharapani, which has numerous hotels and a police check post. While you pass through the village you will see a valley coming in from the east along which the Dudh Khola flows. This is where the Manaslu circuit trek route joins the Marsyangdi River, coming down from the Larkya La.

From here there is a 'low path', or a 'high path' leading to Bagarchhap. The high path involves climbing a series of stone steps for at least 45 minutes, however, it is worth it for the view and the two small villages you pass through. The first is called Odar and the second Ghalan Chok. As this trail is little used by tourists, the villages

have retained their character and there is not a guesthouse in sight. The villages are surrounded by high terraces of maze and soya beans. From here you make the short descent to Bagarchhap for the night. If you have time you may want to visit the splendid Gumpa in Bagarchhap.

Ethnic groups found along your route:

The farmers of the lower Marshyangdi region are primarily Brahmins and Chetris, two high caste Hindu groups, with some communities of Gurungs and Magars in the nearby foothills.

The people of the Manang Valley are Tibetan-type in culture and dress, although their origins have been lost in history. For centuries they have monopolised trade in the upper Marshyangdi, as well as being notorious for their international trading activities. These expeditions take the Manang men as far from home as Singapore, Hong Kong and Bangkok.

The main villages in the Manang Valley - Pisang, Braga and Manang - are reminiscent of American Hopi communities. Consisting of tight clusters of flat-roofed stone buildings, the villages huddle against eroding sandstone cliffs for defence, as well as wind protection. One of the most interesting cultural sites in the Valley is the Braga Gumpa, which dates back 400-500 years and belongs to the Kagyu-pa sect.

The upper Kali Gandaki valley is populated by Thakalis, prosperous traders who once held a monopoly over the Tibetan salt trade. Colourfully decorated mule caravans are frequently seen on the Kali Gandaki route, either carrying loads of sugar, kerosene and rice up the trail or salt and barley down to Pokhara. For agriculture subsistence the Thakalis grow potatoes and barley, their towns reflecting this with their flat roofs for grain-drying and a few elaborate irrigation systems.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Trek to Chame, 2,630m/8,628ft - 5 hours.

Leaving Bagarchhap, you proceed up the valley gaining great views of Annapurna II (7,937m/26,040ft) and Lamjung Himal (6,932m/22,743ft) directly in front of you. After half an hour you will pass through the village of Danakyu. You pass a mani wall and a huge prayer wheel on your left hand side. If you look back you should be able to see the lofty peaks of Manaslu (8,154m/26,752ft), the eighth highest peak in the world, and Peak 29 (7,833m/25,699ft). After Danakyu there is the possibility of taking a "low route". However we recommend you take the "high route" which offers spectacular scenery. You will have a steep climb of just under an hour through a forest populated by pines and firs. The trail then flattens out and you cross a log bridge. You might catch sight of the Langur monkeys, which are resident here.



The trail ascends again and looking back, Manaslu now appears closer than ever. The trail takes you through a natural amphitheatre, with high wooded hillsides all around. A short while after you will reach Timang Meadows - a small village. Continuing on, the path is level and after a river you will come to another village called Thanchok. Further up the trail you may get a sight of Annapurna II towering into the sky.

The path then rejoins the main trail and in this area the trail is scattered with huge boulders. Descending through woodland you pass through the village of Koto which sits in the shadow of Annapurna II and on your right you will see the Naw Khola joining the Marshyangdi from a northern valley. In Koto there is a small Gumpa adorned with brightly coloured paints. The valley then opens out and it is a short level walk to Chame, where you will spend the night. Chame houses the headquarters of the Manang district and you will see district officials riding up and down the trail on horseback, which is still the fastest means of transportation in this area. You enter Chame through an archway and there is a large mani wall just inside. Chame is a good place to do last-minute shopping for the higher altitudes you will soon encounter - you can buy woolly hats and gloves, chocolate and batteries, the bank may be open to change money and you may even be able to make a telephone call. You cross the Marshyangdi to the north side to find your tea house. There are some hot springs just five minutes' walk from the tea house and excellent views of Lamjung Himal.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Trek to Pisang, 3,190m/10,465ft - 5 hours.

Today will be a shorter walk but the scenery is so wonderful that you will want to take your time. Leaving Chame you pass a few mani walls, one overshadowed by a huge wall of rock to your right. You pass through a small hamlet marked by chortens at each end. The trail here is level and for a while is bordered by an attractive dry stone wall. Soon, you arrive at a water-turned prayer wheel. You pass through the village of Bhratang and begin a 45-minute climb through forest, levelling off and then reaching a suspension bridge. Crossing the bridge there is a moderate climb in forest and you begin to move away from the Marshyangdi. The valley begins to broaden out and Pisang Peak (6091m/19,983ft) will be directly in front of you. The woodland here is made up of juniper, pine and fir. You pass a couple of small lakes where wading birds can sometimes be seen. Pisang is divided into upper and lower villages. You cross a small wooden bridge to arrive in Lower Pisang where you will stay in a tea house. It is well worth while crossing the Marshyangdi River and climbing up to the upper village, which is more traditional and has an ornately decorated gompa overlooking both villages.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Trek to Manang, 3,500m/11,482ft.

On this day there are two route possibilities; a lower route of 5 hours or a high route of 6-7 hours.

Either: If your group takes the lower, less strenuous route, the path out of the valley is pretty level and then once out of the valley you begin to contour round to your left and climb up onto a ridge. The view from this ridge is breathtaking looking down into the Manang valley and you will want to stay here all day to enjoy it! Dropping to the valley floor the path is wide and dusty. You will have noticed that the scenery here is becoming more arid, the air drier and the wind colder. Annapurna III (7,555m/24,786ft) rises to the left and passing through the village of Hongde you will see the deserted remains of the old village on its outskirts. The path then rises gradually and takes you into the next valley. After a couple of hours' walk you will pass through the village of Braga, just 30 minutes' walk from Manang. Overnight either at Hotel Yeti or Himalayan Singe - both offer en suite facilities.



Or: If your group are feeling fit and energetic then the high route on the east bank of the Marshyangdi is strenuous, but well worth the effort. You cross the river out of Pisang village and then take a reasonably level path through scrub land, passing a small picturesque lake on your right. You then pass a long mani wall and descend to cross a stream and begin a strenuous zigzagging climb up to the village of Ghyaru (3,673m /12,050ft). A welcome tea shop is the first house you reach in the village. It is well worth climbing up to visit the gompa at the top of the village. The views from here of Annapurna II and Annapurna IV are totally stunning. From Ghyaru you continue up the valley on a wonderful high level trail, passing the ruins of a castle set on a promontory, with views both ways up and down the valley. You then arrive at the village of Ngawal (3,650m / 11,975ft) where there is a large newly built gompa up to the right. You leave the village near a long mani wall. Finally you descend back to the valley floor and re-join the main trail to continue to Braga and Manang. Before continuing it is well worth visiting Braga Gompa, which is the oldest in the area and is a wonderfully atmospheric building. Ask your guide to find the 'man with the key'!

Flora and Fauna

There are many interesting species you will see on this trek. In terms of flora, in the lower regions there are forests of broad-leafed trees such as spruce, silver fir, hemlock, Himalayan cypress, rhododendron and a variety of oaks. Higher up, birch, silver fir, blue pine and juniper trees grow. Flowers include gentian, edelweiss, primula and saxifrage.

You will see a wide variety of fauna while on trek, many of which are used as beasts of burden. It is common to see water buffalo, mules, horses and at higher elevations, yaks. Wild mammals you may see include the Langur monkey, the Indian muntjac (barking deer), the thar (wild goat) and blue sheep. The snow leopard also roams the higher elevations and they have been seen around the "snow lake" above Manang. You will also see many varieties of birds. Common forest birds you may see are several types of thrush, while on the rivers and streams you may see white-capped river chat, the plumbeous redstart, forktails, dippers and kingfishers. Other species you may see are the griffon vulture and lammergeier.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Rest day at Manang.

It is essential to spend time for acclimatisation in this area. There are splendid views of the peaks from both Manang and Braga villages. Manang is a large village situated on a rise immediately across from the huge Gangapurna glacier. A beautiful emerald lake lies at its foot. There are plenty of good walks in the area and for at least a couple of hours you should try to climb as high as possible above the village. Side trips are recommended to a small summit with prayer flags about an hour above Braga village, or up the ridge behind Manang village, or to a viewpoint above the lake opposite Manang Village. It is also possible to walk up the valley towards Tilicho Lake to the village of Khangsar. In addition it is worth visiting the Manang Gumpa or, if it is open, visit the clinic run by the Himalayan Rescue Association - they often have talks about altitude in the afternoon. There are also shops to explore for souvenirs.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Trek to Yak Kharka, 4,090m/13,418ft - 3-4 hours.

Today is a shorter day. However, it is essential for acclimatisation to stop between Manang and Thorong Phedi. You will leave Manang and take about 30 minutes to reach the upper village. After this you contour round the hillside and gain great views of the "grand barrier", the high ridge between Roc Noir and Nilgiri named by French climber Maurice Herzog. Below the grand barrier you will see down the Khangsar valley which leads up to Tilicho lake. Passing the hamlet of Gunsang you continue through the barren upper reaches of the Manang valley. The path ascends gradually but is still hard work due to the increased altitude. You will arrive at Yak Kharka and have lunch there. In the afternoon you could take a walk further up the valley or climb the ridge behind the village - if you make it to the top of the ridge there are great views of the north of the Annapurna range. Even if you only venture a short way above the camp there is the chance to see the large flocks of blue sheep which inhabit this area. Either of these walks would help with acclimatisation.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Trek to Thorong Phedi, 4,490m/14,730ft - 3-4 hours.

Again today is another short day, yet essential for proper acclimatisation. Leaving Yak Kharka you will pass through the small collection of lodges known as Letdar. You will take a high route, which winds its way around the eastern side of the Thorong valley, before dropping down to the valley floor. Crossing the river there is a short but sharp climb to Thorong Phedi. Phedi means "foot of the hill" and while it is the jumping off point for crossing the Thorong La it is not the prettiest place in the world! In the afternoon it is worth walking up beyond the first notch to the collection of huts known as upper base camp, as an acclimatisation walk, and then continuing up to the right to a small peak for superb all round views. Watch out here for blue sheep and snow leopard!

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Cross Thorong La, 5,414m/17,764ft, trek to Muktinath, 3,810m/12,500ft - 8-10 hours.

Today you will need to have plenty of water and your down jacket with you. Starting early in the morning you first ascend steeply for 1½ hours to a rock ledge and notch at 4,679m /15,350ft, then continue up along an ascending and undulating trail. This ascent will seem endless and be warned - there are several false summits - but there are great views back down the valley as you go. Finally, after anything from 3 to 5 hours, you arrive at the top of the Thorong La (5,414m /17,764ft) with its large cairn and many prayer flags. You will have spectacular views of the Annapurna Range to the south and the Mukat Himal bordering Dolpo to the west. The peak immediately south of the pass is Thorong Peak - this is a 'trekkers' peak' and you may see people climbing here.



You will probably not want to linger too long at the pass as it can be very cold and you will probably be feeling the effects of altitude. The descent to Muktinath is very steep and takes some 3 to 4 hours. This is where you might appreciate having walking poles to take the strain off the knees. During the descent there are splendid views of Dhaulagiri (8,167m/26,794ft) and Tukucho Peak (6,920m/22,703ft) and all the way down into the valley of the Kali Gandaki below. Finally you see the buildings of Muktinath coming in to view.

You descend to the main village below the temples, which is actually called Ranipawa and not Muktinath, a name which technically refers just to the temple.

The temples at Muktinath are one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Hindus and Buddhists. It is mentioned in the classic Indian epic, the Mahabharata. You may see pilgrims bathing in the holy water flowing from the 108 spouts carved in the shape of cows' heads surrounding the Vishnu Temple. The temple is built in Tibetan style and contains huge brass idols of Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma and Kali. Muktinath is home to many ethnic Tibetans and is holy to Buddhists as well as Hindus, particularly for the temple in which fire miraculously burns in a stream of water. Pilgrims to Muktinath are able to gain Karma merit in a number of ways. The fire and water temple represents to Buddhists the life giving butter lamp that lights the path to enlightenment. Taking seven steps in devotion at Muktinath can help free you from the grievances of a bad rebirth. If you erect a silk banner at Muktinath you will be reborn in a future life as a universal monarch. Muktinath remains a place of atonement to its pilgrims in this modern age.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Morning view temples, afternoon trek to Jomsom via Lupra, 2,713m/8,900ft - 7 hours.

This morning you will have an opportunity to view the temples at Muktinath, after which you will begin your last day on trek. Here you leave the main trail and gradually climb to the grassy land on the southern side of Muktinath for 3 hours to reach the Lupra pass. The pass offers magnificent views of the mountains including Dhaulagiri, Tukucho, Dhampus peak, Nilgiri, Annapurna I, Tilicho and many others. From the pass you descend for nearly 2 hours to reach Lupra, the only village on the route following the Bonpo religion. You will have the opportunity to visit the monastery nearby. After lunch you walk along the river bank of Lupra Khola for another 45 minutes to meet the main trail of the Kali Gandaki. You then follow the normal route for an hour to reach Jomsom - a large settlement with a STOL (Short Take-Off and Landing) airstrip, police station and bank. The Kali Gandaki here is called the Thak Khola, from the ethnic group, the Thakalis, many of whom live in this area. Enterprising and ambitious, the Thakalis formerly dominated the salt trade with Tibet in this region and after its collapse diversified into running hotels along the trek route, construction and other businesses.

Overnight: Tea House (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Fly to Pokhara.

You take the sensational flight from Jomsom to Pokhara, passing between the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri massifs, and transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax and wander around this lakeside town.

Overnight: Barahi Hotel or Similar, Pokhara (Meals: B)

Day 14: Fly to Kathmandu. Afternoon at leisure.

In the morning you will take the exciting flight back to Kathmandu giving you the opportunity to view the Annapurna Massif you have just trekked around. On arrival, you will be transferred to your hotel and have the rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight: Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu (Meals: B)

Day 15: At leisure in Kathmandu. Transfer to the airport. Depart Nepal.

Kathmandu, Asia's former hippie capital, has a wonderful mixture of crowded bazaars, Hindu and Buddhist temples, shrines and stupas, colonial and ancient architecture as well as more modern buildings. You have the day free to explore the bazaars and temple complexes of Durbar Square, enjoy some last minute shopping or simply relax at your hotel.

Later in the afternoon there will be a group transfer to the airport for your flight back to London.

Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 16: Arrive London.

Our grading system

Annapurna Circuit is graded as a Vigorous/Strenuous trekking holiday, as described below.

Vigorous

Typically these trips involve 8 to 14 days (occasionally more) trekking in relatively remote landscapes. High passes up to 4,900m/16,000ft may be crossed (sometimes snow-covered) and there may also be glacier travel and peak ascents. Walking days can be between 5 and 8 hours with considerable ascents and descents. This grade also covers some European treks of shorter durations. Overnight stops on trek could be in tea houses, mountain huts or camping.

These holidays would suit enthusiastic hill/mountain walkers.

Strenuous

Our strenuous trekking holidays can involve anything from 10 to 30 days on trek and are often in remote areas, far from 'civilisation'. Rest days are interspersed but there may be up to 7 consecutive days of hard walking. Most treks reach altitudes of at least 4,900m/16,000ft and there will be a great deal of ascent and descent. The majority of our strenuous treks utilise camping, tea house or mountain lodge accommodation.

These holidays are suitable for fit individuals who have regular experience of mountain walking.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ An English-speaking Sherpa leader
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK departure tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfer for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara, twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ All meals on trek including tea and coffee
- ✓ An evening fill of your water bottle with drinking water
- ✓ A good quality down jacket, four-season sleeping bag and fleece liner (supplied in-country)
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag
- ✓ Trek staff and full portage
- ✓ Sherpa/porters properly insured and equipped
- ✓ Park fees
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu & Pokhara
- ✗ Tips

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Kathmandu Guest House or Similar, Kathmandu

The Kathmandu Guest House is a 4* hotel situated right in the heart of Thamel - the tourist hub of the city. Known as Kathmandu's 'original hotel' it has been extensively renovated over recent years and has good quality rooms, a spa, gardens and a restaurant. The hotel also houses the excellent Museum of Nepali Art (MONA) which showcases traditional and contemporary works of art - admission is free for Mountain Kingdoms guests.



Tea Houses

Tea houses are a long established tradition in the trekking regions of Nepal, providing an important source of income for the local people. They vary in size and quality. Tea houses offer simple accommodation comprising twin bedded rooms and basic toilets - not usually en suite. Many tea houses also offer rudimentary hot showers for a small fee. Some tea houses have a limited supply of solar powered electricity but this is not always the case so have a head torch handy. Meals are taken in a communal dining area which is warmed by a wood or yak-dung burning stove. Most trekkers relax here for the evening.



For various reasons, it is not possible to guarantee single rooms in tea houses. If you are travelling without a companion and would like a single this may sometimes be possible upon payment of a small supplement on the spot (usually around \$10). Alternatively, if the tea house has an odd number of guests on the night you may be lucky and find yourself in a room on your own. However it is more likely you will share with someone (of the same sex obviously). This would most likely be someone within your group but when the tea houses are busy, it could even be someone else. Be prepared for this! We do however offer the option of a single room in your hotel in Kathmandu for a supplement.



Barahi Hotel or Similar, Pokhara

Only a five minute walk to the Phewa Tal Lake front and the nearby bars and cafes, the Barahi enjoys an enviable location and good facilities. It has a landscaped outdoor pool and an all-day restaurant serving a range of Nepali and international dishes. Rooms are light and well-proportioned and come with a balcony, tea/coffee making facilities, mini bars and free Wi-Fi.

Meal arrangements

Bed and breakfast in Kathmandu and Pokhara, all meals on trek.

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

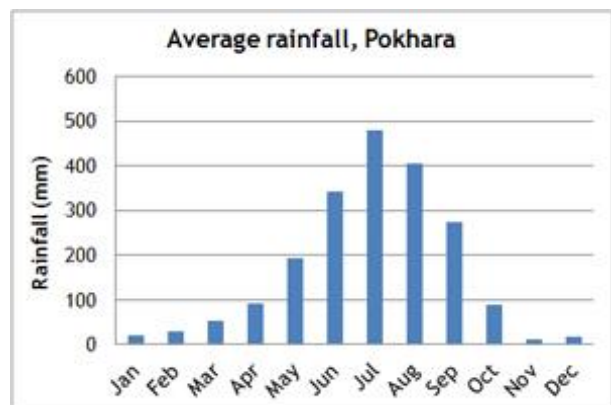
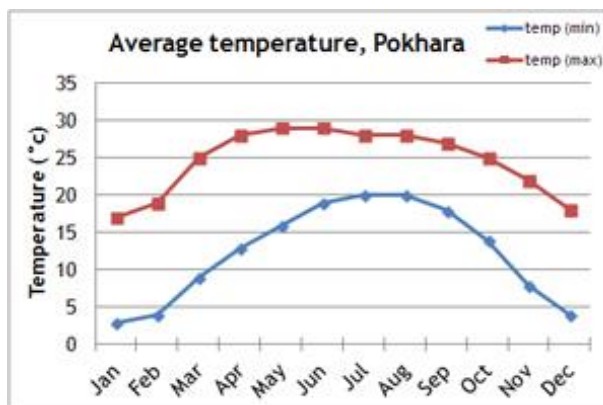
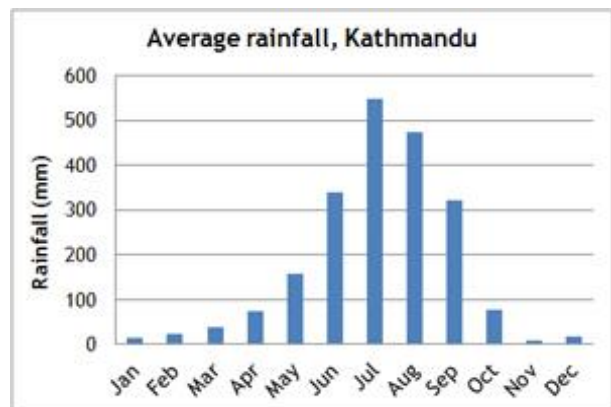
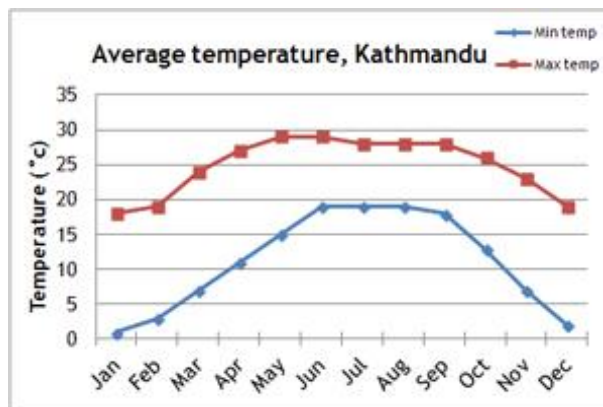
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.



Extra nights in Nepal

If you would like to extend your stay in Nepal, you can add extra nights at your group tour accommodation or choose from our range of distinctive properties in Pokhara and the Kathmandu area. We can offer luxury resorts, heritage hotels, tranquil lodges and characterful cottages. Our selection includes Dwarika's hotel in Kathmandu and its sister property - Dwarika's Resort at Dhulikhel, Pavilions Himalaya at Pokhara, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge and Shivapuri Heights Cottage. Individual extension leaflets for all these options can be downloaded from our website or requested from our office.



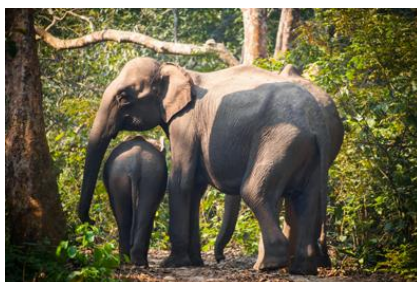
Kathmandu Valley sightseeing excursions

We can arrange half day or full day sightseeing tours taking you to the key cultural attractions of central Kathmandu or the Kathmandu Valley including the World Heritage Sites of Bhaktapur and Patan. Your tour will be led by an English-speaking guide and you will have a private vehicle and driver.



Bhutan and Tibet extensions from Nepal

Whilst in the Himalaya, why not extend your Nepal holiday with a tour of the cultural highlights of Bhutan or Tibet. We offer several extension packages that include all accommodation, meals and sightseeing or we can tailor an itinerary to suit your exact requirements. Download extension leaflets for our Bhutan and Tibet extensions from Nepal, or contact the office to discuss various options.



Wildlife extensions in Nepal - Chitwan, Bardia & Koshi Tappu

Visit Chitwan or Bardia National Parks home to a rich variety of birds and animals including elephant, rhinos, leopard and Bengal tiger. Stay in a comfortable lodge and enjoy a range of wildlife viewing activities. Alternatively visit the renowned Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve - one of the finest birdwatching and wildlife areas in all Asia.



Lumbini

Enjoy a three day extension to the birthplace of Buddha, one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. Take the short flight from Kathmandu, and spend two nights in a comfortable 3* hotel, just steps from the Lumbini temple complex, with a full day to explore the fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Site in the company of your expert local guide.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- We have slightly adapted the original Annapurna Circuit trek to avoid walking on the roads that have been built in the region and thereby retaining the best trekking experience.
- We have not compromised on acclimatisation.
- We endeavour to use the best tea houses available at each overnight stop on our route. By staying in tea houses you will have closer contact with the Nepalese people and are directly contributing to the local economy.
- We include free hire of a down jacket, four-season sleeping bag and fleece liner that are supplied in-country.
- We have a wealth of Himalayan Experience in the company and several members of staff have completed treks in the Annapurna region and so have first-hand knowledge which they are very happy share with you.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



Excellent organisation. Our leader Mani was an interesting guide with tremendous knowledge of local customs, flora and fauna. During the trip I wasn't feeling very well and the leader was very supportive. All staff we had contact with in Nepal were most helpful.

Mrs O, Manchester

The trip was excellent all along. Sirdar, sherpas, porters, scenery, food, lodges etc. were excellent.

- Mr Z, Spain



I found that the trip was very well organised, particularly the trek itself. Nima Temang was excellent and was able to communicate well. It was noticeable that other guides regularly sought his advice and some other groups also sought his advice because they were unable to communicate effectively with their guide. Nima took particular care over keeping the group healthy - from putting out disinfectant hand washing facilities at lunch and dinner times and ensuring that disinfectant hand gel was available at each meal. He often also supervised the kitchen and the preparation of our food. The training and acclimatisation was also excellent with extra excursions etc. arranged, which meant that none of our party suffered from altitude sickness.

-Mr C, Channel Islands



Well planned trip - all the info as always is detailed and excellent, inc. equipment advice. Have travelled with you before and found this, as always, was up to your usual high standard. The Sherpa leader and porters were great and looked after us very well, sorry to say good-bye to them. A great trip, and as the only woman in the group at 60+ felt very happy that we made it all the way round.

- Ms P & Mr S, Sheffield



This trek was a very well put together, extremely well guided and I thought that the pre-trip briefing notes were very comprehensive.

-Mr S, Devon

Everything was excellent. Having discovered how thoroughly enjoyable it was to have everything done (and carried) for me, by people who were always friendly and attentive, I am grateful to Mountain Kingdoms and I look forward to booking with you again.

- Mr C, W Sussex

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

